

PLAIN TALKS

April 1988

UNDERSTANDING

AIDS

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Volume 67

Number 3

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Carol Morris



Dr. Paul Chu, director of the Texas Center for Superconductivity at the University of Houston, demonstrates a superconductivity experiment during the International Edison Science Youth Day Symposium. More than 100 students and teachers attended the symposium courtesy of Gulf States.

On the cover, Misinformation about AIDS persists. For this reason, Gulf States has started an employee information program on the deadly but preventable disease. Inside you will find a brochure giving the plain facts on AIDS.

PLAIN TALKS

April 1988

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Employees who change residences or offices should fill out company mailing-address-forms (GSU0012-00-81) and return them to the mailroom in the Edison Plaza. GSU publications, departmental mailings and other company information are not automatically forwarded; addresses must be corrected when employees move.

MAILBOX



Pouring rain

"I know it's part of your job, but I do want to express my deep appreciation for the hours of work in the pouring rain and cold your men put in to get me back in business," writes customer C. M. Rougan to Zachary superintendent **Charles Coleman**.

Nicest employees anywhere

"I would like to say that your employees are the nicest and most helpful anywhere," writes a Beaumont customer who was helped by an unidentified employee after she had run out of gas. "We need more people in the world today who truly care about helping other people."

Electromagnetic help

"Thank you for your time and effort," writes a Conroe school teacher to **Connie Calfee**, Western Division consumer information coordinator. With the help of **Floyd Langlois**, **Greg Marshall** and others at Lewis Creek Station, Calfee instructed a group of intermediate school students on how to make an electromagnet. "You helped us all understand more about electromagnets," the teacher writes.

Quick action

"Thanks to your team for their concern and quick action," writes Sears store manager **Bill Robertson** to **Ted Meinscher**, Lake Charles Division vice-president. On the morning of Feb. 12, an electrical fire knocked out power for the Sears store and the separate auto center. "Gulf States arrived moments later and by 10:45 a.m. the lines between the auto center and the main store had been separated and the store was open for business," Robertson writes.

Safety emphasis

Byron Franks, shift leader at Dupont's Orange plant, thanks safety and health representative **Donald Barnett**, for conducting safety meetings at the plant. "His electrical terminology was elementary enough for us to understand and safety emphasis was always there," Franks says in a letter to **Ron McKenzie**, Port Arthur Division vice president.

Lighting up Lafayette

Denise Durel of the Lafayette Muscular Dystrophy Association

Helen Kennedy



Greg Gothreaux writes to thank Gulf States marketing agent **Greg Gothreaux** for his time and energy with the Light Up Lafayette Parish Decorating Contest. Durel points out that such fundraising activities enable MDA to support patient services to the 330+ patients in Acadiana suffering from neuromuscular diseases.

Accommodating people

"Thank you so much for all your help in arranging our utility service," writes Beaumont customer Mrs. David Antilley to **Susan Delaney**. "It really makes the transacting of such changes much easier when dealing with such accommodating people as you." Delaney is a Beaumont customer accounting clerk.

Most memorable Christmas

"Please convey to all those at Gulf States who cooperated in the Christmas project our sincere thanks for a job very well done," writes Dorothy Garry, executive director of The Huguen Center for Physically Handicapped Children to **Teresa George**, Port Arthur PBX operator. George organized a fund-raising project to buy gifts for the school's residents. "With your efforts and those of many of your colleagues at Gulf States Utilities, our special children were able to have one of the most memorable and loving Christmases some of them have ever experienced. Each of the gifts you selected was chosen with care and love, and it was evident on the faces you saw here Christmas morning how much your efforts were appreciated. The fact that you chose to be with us on Christmas morning to see the children have their Christmas is indeed an indication of your selflessness."

Clarke comes through

Westlake, La. mayor, **Dudley Dixon**, writes to thank **Dudley Clarke**, Lake Charles general line supervisor, for his help when a utility pole fell across a road. "We appreciate all the efforts Mr. Clarke put forth," writes the mayor.

Great organization

Clyde Sluhan, chairman of Master Chemical Corporation of Perysburg, Ohio, writes to thank Gulf States for restoring service to his company's facilities at Elkins Lake in the Western Division. "How you folks get those repairs done so quickly is beyond me. It shows great organization," Sluhan writes.



When spray painting a vehicle, Chad Dean wears the protective gear hanging on the wall behind him. "GSU promotes safety more than any company I've ever been around," he says.

by E. Kelly Merritt

When Chad Dean was growing up in Lake Charles, he and his friends raced motorcycles and boats on the weekends. Although he didn't know it at the time, his hobby was preparing him for a career as one of the best paint and body shop men in the area.

"We were always fixing up little things," says the Lake Charles garage mechanic. "I had a three point hydro, a small race boat with pipes coming out of the back."

Dean never entered formal competitions. He and his friends just tinkered with the machinery to see who could make the fastest piece of equipment. "From that, I learned mechanical work ... and you wanted your equipment to look good, so then I learned to paint."

Such attention to detail helped him land jobs where he perfected his mechanical and painting skills. Now, the 12-year GSU veteran does almost all the vehicle

E. Kelly Merritt

Chad Dean

From boats to bucket trucks

painting in the Lake Charles garage. And until the system garage in Lake Charles temporarily closed, Dean painted all the new equipment and helped fabricate the new line trucks.

Almost every truck now in the GSU system was originally painted by Dean. Although some have been repainted at their own location since, Dean says he can tell which trucks still wear his paint jobs.

Since there has been no new equipment to paint lately, most of the time Dean spends on body work involves repairing rust spots or fender benders on division vehicles or refinishing the booms and repairing the fiberglass buckets on bucket trucks. He's as good with a wrench as he is with a paint brush, so he also spends a lot of time in the garage working on engines. "He's a good trouble-shooter with electrical work," says shop foreman Frank LeBaron.

Before coming to GSU, Dean was the "detail man" for the local Mercedes-Benz dealership. There, he put the finishing touches on cars such as Porsches, Mercedes', Volkswagens and even a Maserati. But he doesn't miss painting European sports cars. "Here, I don't have to worry about the color match. Everything is white." As a money-saving measure, GSU vehicles are painted all white instead of the customary blue and white. The most detailed part of his job now is placing the strip of blue reflective tape on each car he repaints.

Ironically, the detail work is what Dean says is the easiest while most other painters say it is the most difficult.

Dean's skills at body work are almost legendary. He spends his spare time at home repairing and repainting cars, many of which belong to local car collectors. Ed Grimshaw, Lake Charles operating superintendent, owns six 1966 Ford Mustangs. Dean has restored the body on two of them and is working on a third. Says Grimshaw, "I stressed to him that I wanted it to be an enduring job. One he painted six years ago is still fine. His work holds up great."

Says LeBaron, who previously worked as shop foreman at two local automobile dealerships: "He's probably the best painter I've ever seen and I've been around a lot of them."

Are your health care habits in shape?

EDITOR'S NOTE: This article is the first in a series which will appear in *Plain Talks* about our medical costs and benefits.

by Betty Gavora

Each week Gulf States writes a check to pay our medical claims. That check represents costs such as your visit to the doctor last week and the bypass surgery of your friend at the power plant. The amount of the check is different from week to week because it represents actual costs — the medical costs of GSU people.

At the end of the year, those costs are added to the fee GSU pays Provident Life and Accident Company to administer the plan. An inflation factor is added in and Provident tells Gulf States how much it will owe for the next year. The company then knows how much it will pay in premiums for employees, and you and I know how much our premiums will be.

The plan is **experience-rated**, meaning if our medical costs go up, our premiums go up. If our costs go down, our premiums go down. We pay only for ourselves — Gulf States employees, retirees, annuitants and their dependents — and only for the costs we incur.

As medical costs continue to rise, what can we do to keep from feeling the pinch in our own pocketbooks without sacrificing the quality of our medical care?

First, we can use our medical benefits wisely. Often, there are different ways to treat a medical problem. Some may be just as effective, but less costly. To find out the best options for your particular case, **ask**. Ask your doctor, ask the nurse, ask Employee Benefits. Following are some questions to consider before beginning a medical procedure:

Often there are different ways to treat a medical problem. To find the best option for your case — ask.

— *Can my minor surgery be performed at an outpatient clinic instead of in the hospital?* Outpatient procedures generally cost less and you can recuperate in your own bed.

— *If a hospital stay is needed, can I check into the hospital the day of the surgery instead of the day or weekend before.* There is no need to check into the hospital on Friday for treatment that won't begin until Monday.

— *Can I have some of my pre-surgery tests run in advance, within five days of entering the hospital?* This is called **preadmission testing** and saves time and money.

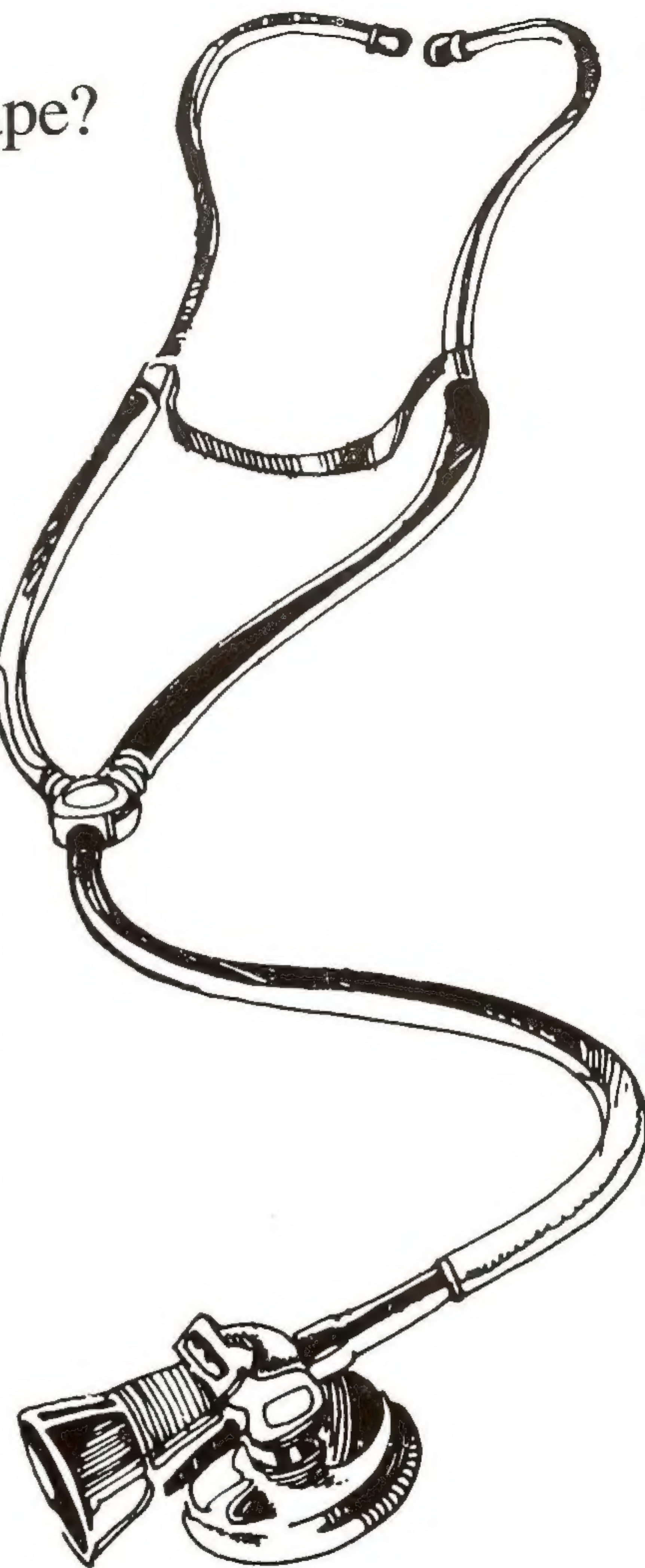
— *Does the hospital or blood bank have up-to-date records of my blood donations?* If you've donated blood under the company blood plan, you won't be charged for any units you or your family use during surgery.

— *Can I go to my family doctor with this emergency instead of to the hospital emergency room?* Hospital emergency rooms can cost up to four times more.

— *Did I receive all of the services listed on this hospital bill?* Ask the hospital billing office about any items in question and double-check for errors. The larger the bill, the greater the possibility for error.

— *Will my GSU medical or dental plan cover this procedure?*

— *Is there a less expensive, generic alternative for this medication or can America's Pharmacy fill this prescription?*



And ask yourself the most important question:

— *Am I taking good care of myself and my family? Am I having regular checkups, eating a balanced diet and getting enough exercise?*

UNDERSTANDING

AIDS

by Betty Gavora

When you hear the word AIDS," I asked some employees, "what comes to mind?" They responded — "A deadly disease."

With so much misinformation going around, it's important to know the facts about AIDS.

"A high price for a one-night stand."

"Homosexual activities."

"Prostitutes and I.V. drug users."

"Hemophiliacs and innocent babies."

"A lot of fear ... a lot of suffering."

All these answers and more apply to Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), an epidemic that was first reported in the United States in 1981 and is expected to kill some 54,000 Americans by 1991.

With so much information and misinformation going around, it is important for us to know the facts about AIDS, what this disease really is, how it is caused and how it can be prevented. That is the reason for the employee information program on AIDS that began in March.

According to medical reports, the virus that causes AIDS attacks

the body's natural immune system and damages a person's ability to fight off infections that could be controlled in a normal body. But in the body of a person with AIDS, these infections leave the door open for "opportunistic diseases" such as pneumonia, tuberculosis and certain kinds of cancer, which may eventually cause death.

There is something very important for us to know about AIDS. While it cannot, at this time, be cured, it can definitely be prevented. C. Everett Koop, Surgeon General of the United States, says, "AIDS comes from sexual contacts with infected persons and from the sharing of syringes and needles. There is no danger of infection with AIDS virus by casual social contact." Casual social contact includes such things as shaking hands, social kissing, crying, coughing or sneezing.

The surgeon general adds that AIDS is not contracted from "swimming in pools or bathing in hot tubs or from eating in restaurants. Nor is it contracted from sharing bed linens, towels, cups, straws, dishes or other eating utensils. It is also not transmitted by

touching doorknobs, toilets, telephones, office machinery or household furniture." In other words, AIDS is not spread through common everyday contact. The two major ways the AIDS virus is spread are through sexual contact and the sharing of contaminated needles by users of illegal intravenous drugs.

Dr. Koop goes on to say, "Knowing the facts about AIDS can prevent the spread of the disease. Education of those who risk infecting themselves or infecting other people is the only way we can stop the spread of AIDS."

During the months of April and May there will be scheduled employee and family meetings on this topic, with informative videotapes shown and other information provided. In this issue of *Plain Talks*, you will find a brochure with factual information about AIDS. We encourage you to share it with your loved ones so they can learn the true facts about this disease and its prevention.

If the brochure is not attached, call Employee Communications at (409) 838-6631 ext. 2592 or 733-2592 for a copy.

"There is no danger of infection with the AIDS virus by casual social contact."

*C. Everett Koop
U.S. Surgeon General*

Who gets AIDS?

According to a report by the American Red Cross and the Public Health Service, about 98 percent of all AIDS cases reported in the United States occurred in these groups of people:

65 percent — Sexually active homosexual and bisexual men (or men who have had sex with another man since 1977).

17 percent — Present or past users of illegal I.V. drugs.

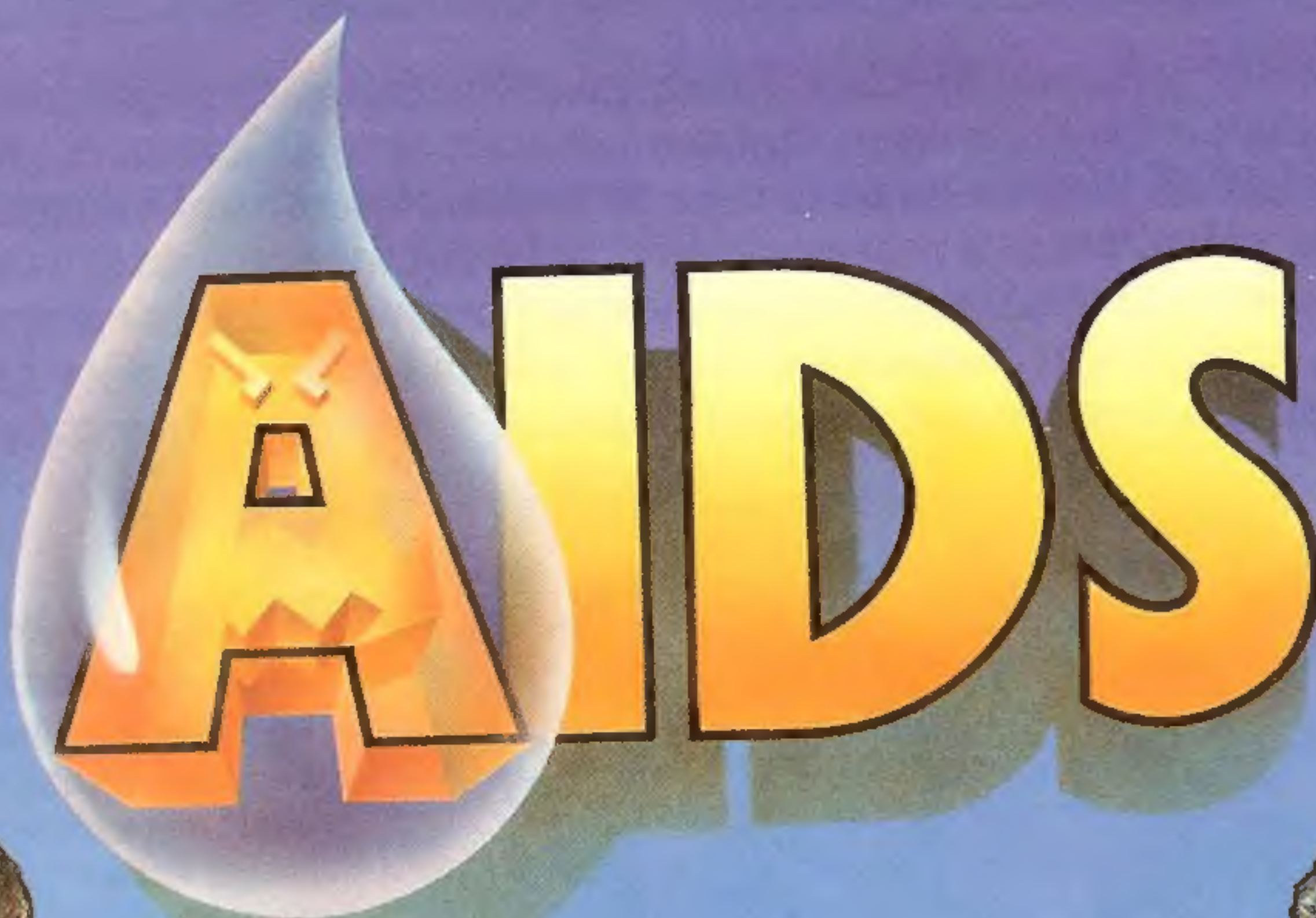
8 percent — Homosexual and bisexual men who are also I.V. drug abusers.

2 percent — Persons who have had transfusions with blood or blood products.

1 percent — Persons with hemophilia or other blood clotting disorders who have received clotting factor products.

4 percent — Heterosexual men and women (these include sex partners of persons with AIDS or at risk for AIDS, and people born in countries where spread of the virus by heterosexual sex is thought to be more common than in the United States).

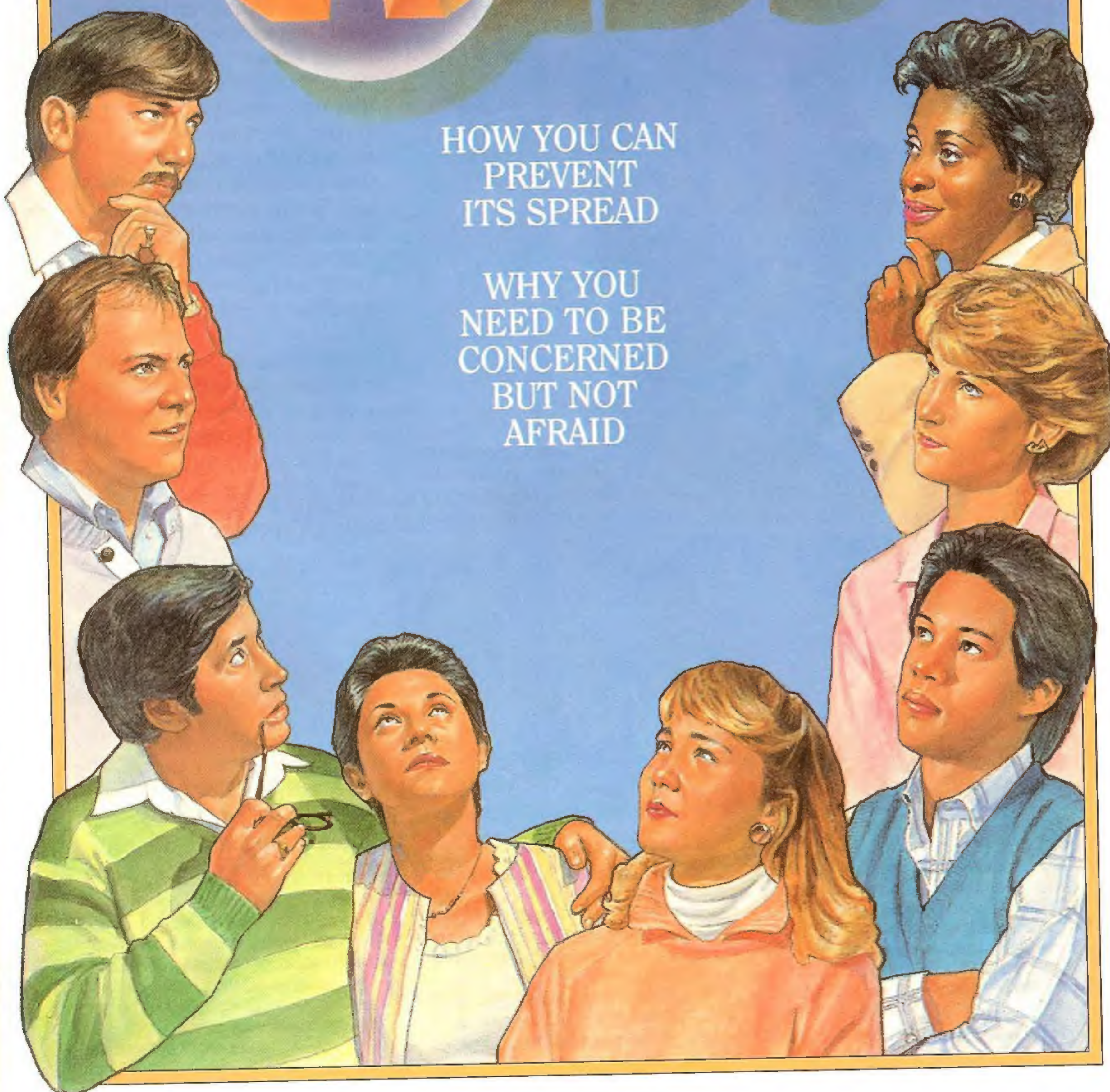
About **3 percent** of AIDS patients do not fall into any of these groups, but scientists believe that the virus was spread to them in similar ways. Some patients could not be followed up or died before complete medical histories could be taken.



AIDS

HOW YOU CAN
PREVENT
ITS SPREAD

WHY YOU
NEED TO BE
CONCERNED
BUT NOT
AFRAID



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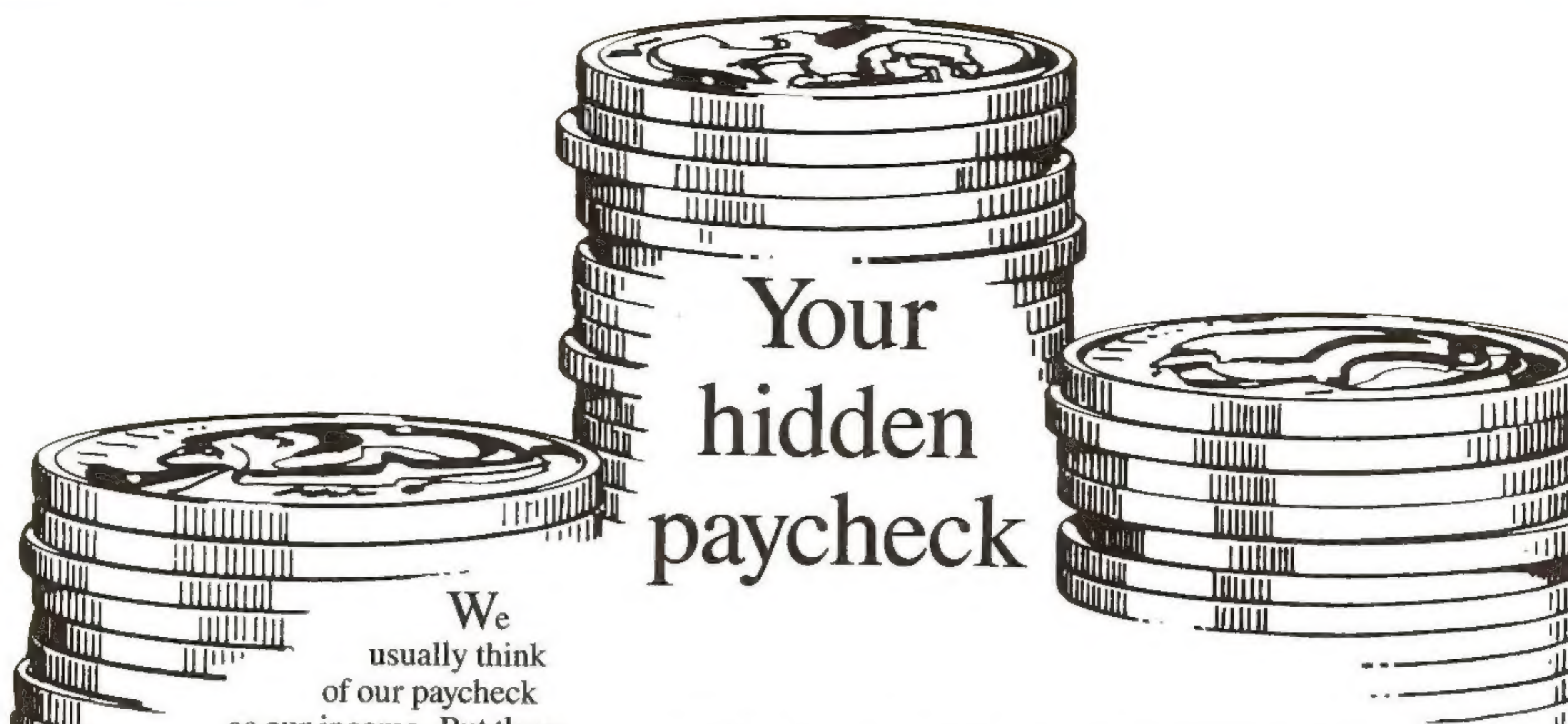
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We usually think of our paycheck as our income. But there is a lot more to our compensation, a sort of hidden paycheck, that goes toward benefits and taxes. The amount of the hidden paycheck varies, but in all cases it is a substantial amount.

To get an idea of the size of the hidden paycheck, consider Joey Archer, an imaginary employee. Joey has been with GSU for 11 years. He is a lineman-1st class and makes \$15.13 an hour. His wife and three children are enrolled as dependents on his medical and dental coverage. The chart at right shows the cost of Joey's benefits and taxes, most of which don't show up on his check stub.

Of course, the actual costs vary with each employee's compensation and level of participation. There are other costs too, such as the merchandise account plan, travel accident insurance and the costs of administering the benefit plans.

Says Mike Sealy, manager of Employee Benefits, "We are pleased that more and more employees are becoming aware of the value of their employee benefits. We are challenged to maintain a competitive but cost effective benefits package to help attract and retain the most qualified employees. We constantly monitor national benefit trends and the benefits provided by area industries and neighboring utilities. According to our surveys, our benefits package compares well."

BENEFIT		GSU's ANNUAL COST
MEDICAL INSURANCE (employee's coverage)		1,346.28
company contribution for dependent coverage		2,884.68
DENTAL INSURANCE (employee's coverage)		90.12
company contribution for dependent coverage		202.92
HOLIDAY PAY		1,210.40
daily compensation X 10		
VACATION PAY		1,815.60
daily compensation X 15 vacation days		
SOCIAL SECURITY (employer's cost)		2,363.43
.0751 X annual pay (up to \$3379.50)		
STATE UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE (Texas)		196.00
(Louisiana)		257.60
FEDERAL UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE COST		56.00
FINANCIAL AID TO EDUCATION		362.05
(average amount of yearly refund for employees enrolled)		
LIFE INSURANCE		348.96
RETIREMENT		94.41
Annual pay X .003		
WORKERS COMPENSATION (Texas)		777.00
(Louisiana)		1,148.00
THRIFT PLAN		936.00
(Joey contributes 6 percent of his income, GSU adds 3 percent).		
P.B.G.C. (Federal retirement plan insurance)		16.00
TOTALS	Texas	\$12,699.85
	Louisiana	\$13,132.45
PERCENTAGE OF ANNUAL COMPENSATION		
Texas		45%
Louisiana		46%

Annual benefit and tax costs of Joey Archer, imaginary employee.

Employees pledge \$89,000 in 1988 to Project CARE

by E. Kelly Merritt

Gulf States employees have pledged to give Project CARE over \$89,000 during 1988, according to Don Pumphrey, senior public affairs representative and Project CARE coordinator.

Although employee contributions are down from 1987, Pumphrey says the level of giving shows "tremendous employee support for Project CARE."

Project CARE (Community Assistance Relating to Energy) is a volunteer effort to help elderly Gulf States customers pay their energy bills during financial emergencies. The funds may be used for heating or cooling bills regardless of whether the source is electricity, gas, butane or propane. Minor weatherization work and heating and cooling equipment repairs may also qualify. Customers can donate by adding \$1 to their monthly GSU payment or through a monthly pledge. Customers contributed \$228,000 in 1987.

The program helped 5,700 households pay their energy bill last year, Pumphrey says. The average assistance payment was \$64.

Project CARE funds are administered by social service organizations. Eligible persons must be 60 years or older and facing a financial emergency. An individual may receive assistance twice a year, up to \$100 per payment. All funds contributed go directly to qualified recipients. GSU and the social service agencies absorb the cost of administering the program.



"Every cent that comes into the program actually goes to help the needy," Pumphrey says. "The agencies that administer the program contribute by not charging administrative costs. It costs them another 20 percent to get that money out there, so that's a healthy contribution on the part of those agencies," he adds.

Virginia Setze, a social worker with the Capitol Area Agency on Aging in Baton Rouge, says Project CARE fills a need which would otherwise not be met. "It's kind of

a partnership with the social service agency that is unique. There is no way we could do this without GSU." Despite the help, Setze says the need is always greater than the funds available.

Says Pumphrey, "We're thankful for the continued level of support. And if customer contributions maintain their current levels, we look forward to another good year."

"We really do say 'thank you' to Gulf States employees and all the customers who have helped," Setze adds.

1988 employee pledges to Project CARE

The table shows employee pledges to Project CARE ranked by each division's percent change from 1987.

DIVISION	CONTRIBUTIONS	PERCENT CHANGE FROM 1987
Lake Charles	\$11,137.00	+ 10.8%
Western	4,945.00	+ 3.4
Port Arthur	4,906.00	+ 3.2
River Bend	15,352.00	+ 0.8
Corporate Headquarters	15,484.00	+ 0.7
Beaumont	6,941.00	- 1.3
Baton Rouge	30,518.10	- 5.4
TOTAL	\$89,283.10	- 0.2



For the last six months of 1987, Louisiana Station had the best safety record among the Louisiana power plants.

Lewis Creek, Port Arthur win safety awards

"1987 was a good year for safety at Gulf States," reports occupational health and safety manager Mike Durham.

Lewis Creek Station and the Port Arthur Division won the President's Award for having the best safety records in 1987. The annual contest honors the power plant and the division with the lowest accident rate for the year.

Lewis Creek earned the award with an accident rate of zero. Port Arthur's accident rate was 1.62.

The accident rate is figured by a formula which combines the frequency and severity of vehicle and personal injury accidents. Disabling, or lost-time, medical case and vehicle accidents are considered in the formula for power plants. The division contest formula considers only disabling and vehicle accidents. Minor accidents requiring only first aid are not considered in either formula.

In recognition of the honor, each individual at Lewis Creek and Port Arthur will receive an imprinted jacket.

In other safety news:

— Sabine Station was honored for reaching 3 million man-hours without a lost-time injury. This is only the second time that a GSU fossil fuel plant has earned that recognition.

— Louisiana Station received the safety flag for having the lowest accident rate among Louisiana power plants during the last six months of 1987. Lewis Creek captured that honor in Texas.

— River Bend Station is in hot pursuit of a world record for longest man-hours worked at a nuclear plant without a disabling injury. As of Jan. 1, River Bend had reached 5.7 million man-hours. The current safety record is held by Consolidated Edison's Indian Point Unit 2 reactor in New York at 7.4 million man-hours.

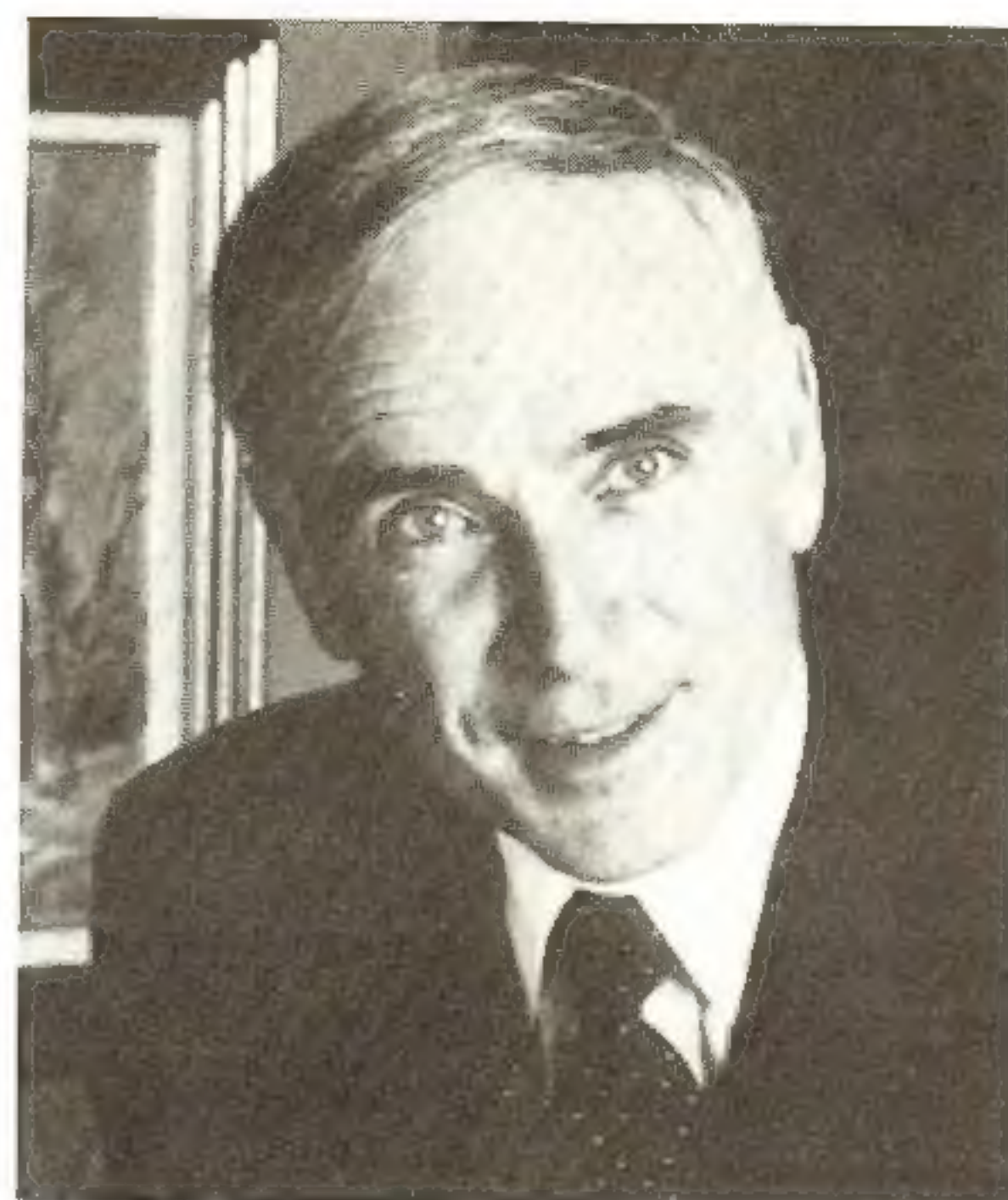
Babin Miller earns 4-H recognition

Harriet Babin Miller, Baton Rouge marketing supervisor, has been named national winner in the 4-H alumni recognition program. She is one of eight former members who will receive the Gold Key Award during the 67th National 4-H Congress in Chicago in December.

Miller was a 4-H member in Ascension Parish for eight years, winning several local and state

awards. She is currently a charter member and chairman of the Louisiana 4-H Foundation.

She has helped obtain support from Gulf States and other Louisiana power suppliers to sponsor the 4-H electric energy program. She also oversees fund-raising activities for the foundation, helping it collect almost \$500,000 to finance educational trips, awards and scholarships for 4-H members in Louisiana.



Sam Segnar

Segnar joins GSU board

Sam Segnar, chairman of Vista Chemical Co. of Houston, has been elected to Gulf States Board of Directors.

A GSU customer from The Woodlands, Texas, Segnar became chairman of Vista in 1986. Vista, established in 1984 from Conoco Chemicals, operates a plant in Lake Charles.

Segnar previously served as chairman of HNG/Internorth, now Enron Corp. of Houston, and Belco Petroleum Corp. of New York. He also serves on the boards of Hartmarx Corp. of Chicago, Textron Inc. of Providence, R. I., Seagull Energy Corp. of Houston and Becor Western Inc. of South Milwaukee, Wisc.

"With his extensive background in strategic management and his experience with heavily-regulated companies, Mr. Segnar is an invaluable addition to the board at this difficult time," said GSU Chairman Dr. Linn Draper in announcing Segnar's election on Feb. 5.

A native of Hope, Ark., Segnar attended Texas A&M University and the University of Oklahoma, where he earned a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering in 1950. In 1967, he completed the Advanced Management Program at Harvard's Graduate School of Business Administration.

GSU sends students to Edison symposium

GSU's Western and Beaumont divisions sent students and teachers to the Thomas Alva Edison symposium in Houston Feb. 10-12. The symposium's purpose is to encourage students to pursue careers in science, engineering and technology. It was held in February to coincide with Edison's birthday.

Western Division sponsored over 100 students and teachers to attend the sessions, where they heard lectures from notables such as Walker Cisler, chairman of the Edison Foundation, Dr. Aaron Cohen, director of NASA's Johnson Space Center, Dr. Paul Chu, director of the Texas Center for Superconductivity at the University of Houston, and Dr. Michael DeBakey, chancellor of Baylor College of Medicine.

The students also had the opportunity to tour high technology facilities including the Johnson Space Center, the Texas Medical Center, the Port of Houston, Dow Chemical Co., a Houston Lighting and Power Co. generating plant, Exxon's Baytown Refinery and the Houston Area Research Center.

"The symposium was excellent and I have received many ideas to share with my fellow teachers and my students," writes Conroe school teacher Pamela Swisher to consumer information coordinator Connie Calfee. "This symposium definitely gave ideas to help increase scientific literacy among the students that I teach."

E. Kelly Merritt



BWR-6 managers from around the world met in February at River Bend Station. Gathered in the control room are, from left, Manuel Acero of Spain, Randy Hutchinson of Mississippi, Louis Cerezo of Spain, Mike Lyster of Ohio, Jerry Roberts of Mississippi, River Bend manager Tom Plunkett, S. J. Liao of Taiwan, Hugo Schumacher of Switzerland, Jim Wilson of Illinois, and Shuh-Ji Tsuei of Taiwan.

World BWR-6 plant managers meet at River Bend Station

When all the Boiling Water Reactor-6 (BWR-6) nuclear plant managers in the world meet, what's on their agenda? To find out, *Plain Talks* talked with these plant managers during their 3-day meeting in February at River Bend Station.

Although they represent plants in Switzerland, Spain, China, Illinois, Ohio, Mississippi and Louisiana, these managers say they experience the same problems because they are using the same General Electric equipment. As one said, "It's like driving three different Chevy's. The models may be different, but the car is basically the same."

So what did these nuclear experts discuss? According to Tom Plunkett, River Bend plant manager, topics included SCRAM reduction techniques, simulator experiences, reactor water cleanup heat exchanger flange leaks and pump seal problems, feedwater/reactor chemistry and techniques for shortening refueling outages, among others ... and things like crawfish, Southern hospitality and the first snow storm in Baton Rouge in 10 years.

What is the value of these meetings? All echo the same idea — the opportunity to share technical information, learn from each other and avoid similar problems in the future.

PLAIN TALKS

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Beaumont, Texas 77704

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Beaumont, Texas
Permit No. 11

336 employees don't need to read this ad.

If you're one of the 7 percent of Gulf States employees or one of the few retirees who don't own company stock, you can stop reading here. But chances are you do share in the ownership of the company. Being a part owner gives you the privilege of participating in the company's decision making process. You can do that by voting your proxy for the May 5 shareholders' meeting.

Make sure you're counted by returning your proxy to Shareholder Services.